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THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE REFUTED.

Comments in Review of Dr. Paul Carus's "Religion of Science" and
"Science a Religious Revelation."

BY DR WILLIAM BRENTON GREENE, JR.

[Reprinted from *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*,
Vol. III., p. 689-691.]

THESE little pamphlets deserve a more extended notice and a more thorough review than our limits will permit or their size would seem to demand. They are a careful statement of a so-called religious movement, which, through the circulation of *The Monist*, has, within a few years, become widely known and not a little influential; and they are from the official pen of that journal's able editor, the prophet and apostle and scribe of the movement referred to. According to him, religion is the reverse of agnosticism and indifferentism. It is "a conviction that regulates man's conduct, affords comfort in affliction, and consecrates all the purposes of life." The conviction that does this, and so the faith of religion, is "the conviction that truth can be found, and that truth is the sole redeemer." The truth as to God is not atheism, that there is no God; nor polytheism, that there are many gods; nor anthropotheism, that God is a personal being like man; nor pantheism, that all is God; but it is entheism, that God is "superpersonal" and is "the eternal of nature." That is, nature is God; yet of nature those elements alone are divine which "serve us as authority for conduct," for only these are eternal. The truth as to ethics is that "duty, not happiness, is the right ethical principle." We ought to live according to nature, according to the eternal principles of right, whether it pleases us to do so or not. The truth as to the soul is that it "consists of impulses, dispositions, and ideas." "Impulses are tendencies to act." "Dispositions are inherited habits." "Ideas are representations and are developed out of feelings." "Thought is the interaction which takes place between ideas," and it is rational when it rises to the universal. Personality is an "illusion." We do not have ideas, we are ideas. There is no such thing as personal identity. "The expression, 'I,' being for a continuous series of acts the same in spite of many changes, produces the illusion that the acting person himself remains the same throughout." The truth as

to immortality is, as might be supposed, that it is not personal. You and I shall not live forever; for you and I are only illusions; the truth, however, that is in the ideas which constitute us, this shall live forever, for this is God, the eternal in nature. The sum and substance of religion is to have "a resolute confidence in the unbreakable and unbroken laws of existence, and so to come into intimate and "truly personal relation" to the eternal of nature, in which, through which, and to which we live.

Such are the main truths of "the religion of science"; and it is called "the religion of science" because its doctrines are the results of "the most reliable and truly scientific methods." In these pamphlets we find much to commend.

So clear is their style that the meaning cannot be mistaken. Not a little of that meaning also we indorse heartily. That as yet we know only in part, and that pious devotion to be of the right kind must be accompanied by the spirit of research; that truth and reason are one, and that, consequently, religion and science should be harmonious; that duty, not happiness, is the principle of true life; and that "the most beautiful, the profoundest, and the sublimest of all sayings are those spoken by the great Master of Galilee:" with all this and more we are, of course, in entire accord; and we must protest most earnestly against the author's constant insinuation that the great body of Christians differ from him at these points.

To the view of religion presented, however, we take the following important and fatal exceptions:

1. It is not religious. It certainly is not so in the popular sense of that word. By religion men generally understand "the sum of their relations to God." It is thus that even such writers as Buckle and Lecky use the term, when they assert that religion will eventually disappear. Our author, therefore, misleads the community at the outset. What he calls religion is not what they take it to be. He sides with Buckle and Lecky as to the future of religion, but by a deceptive nomenclature he makes it appear that he sides with the people against them.

2. It is not scientific. Science is systematised knowledge, truth rationally presented. Now Dr. Carus's doctrine of religion is based on the claim that

God is not a personal being, but is the ethical and so eternal principle in nature. This claim is made on the ground that it expresses "the result of experience, not of one man only, but of the whole race." God is not a supernatural person. He always has been to the mass of mankind, "*an idea of moral import.*" This, however, is contrary to the best attested facts; and so Dr. Carus's theory, whatever may be true of it, rests on a foundation which is utterly unscientific. Tiele, in his *Outlines of the History of Religion*, page 6, says, "The statements as to the absence of religious elements from the thought of savage tribes rest either on inaccurate observation or confusion of ideas;" and it would be easy to show that the conception of God involved in these religious elements has been of a being greater than but like ourselves. Only where there has been high intellectual development, and there only in exceptional cases, has a moral *idea* been substituted, or could a moral *idea* have been substituted, for a personal deity. It is in the latter that the "whole race" naturally believes.

3. It is unhistorical. That is, history teaches that the superpersonal conception of God has not been held even in exceptional cases. As Martensen says (*Christian Ethics*, Vol. I., p. 61), "However many attempts have been made to apprehend God as a superpersonal being (transcending the conception of personality, because this must be too narrow, too anthropomorphic), yet all these attempts have only led to the result that God has been apprehended as a being *beneath* personality."

4. It is not moral. That is, on Dr. Carus's hypothesis an ethical system becomes impossible. "Personality is the basis of moral activity"; but, according to the "religion of science" personality is only an illusion.

5. It is not rational. Like science, it rests on observation and experience. These presuppose the validity of consciousness. The first testimony of consciousness is to personality. Now personality, Dr. Carus would have us think, is an illusion. That is, he begins by undermining what must be the foundation of his whole system.

6. It is not even fair. It grossly misrepresents and distorts in its own interests even the "Word of God." Only two examples of this can now be given. Dr. Carus speaks of Paul's view of marriage as irreligious and sensual. He bases this criticism on 1 Cor. vii., 9, "It is better to marry than to burn." He conceals, however, the facts, that the apostle is writing in view of exceptional conditions, a time of "present distress"; that even the expression that is objected to teaches that even under such circumstances marriage is to be encouraged rather than sensual desire permitted; and that when he sets forth the normal

theory of marriage it is in such words as these (Eph. v., 25), "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it."

Again, Dr. Carus argues at length to prove that Christ abolished prayer in the sense of petition. Did not the Saviour, however, say, "Ask, and it shall be given you?" and, "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

IN REPLY TO A PRESBYTERIAN.

Among the reviews of *The Religion of Science* written by conservative critics, the most weighty, the most serious, and, at the same time, the most sympathetic comes from a Presbyterian pen. Among the liberal theologians, many hesitate to draw the last consequences; they are, as a rule, radical in externalities but fear to investigate or even touch the very core of the religious problem. They take offence at one or other dogma, which in its literal interpretation has become unbelievable, and pin their faith the more solidly and systematically upon the main significance of traditional dogmatology, which is a belief in religious metaphysics—in a metaphysical God and a metaphysical soul; yet the metaphysical question is after all the present issue on which all other religious problems hinge; and while externalities of all kinds are harmless, it is the false metaphysics which we must get rid of in religion. I have met perhaps more members of conservative churches, who in personal conversations were willing to make concessions, than liberals. The liberal theologian generally claims that if we surrender the belief in a personal God and a personal ego-soul, religion must go and nothing is left; while a conservative theologian, although unwilling to accede to a positivistic conception of religion, understands better that a change in interpretation would not change facts, and that a religious reformation would not mean a destruction of religion itself.

My Presbyterian critic, Dr. William Benton Greene,¹ does not treat me as an infidel and a heretic. Nor does he warn the faithful not to read expositions of the Religion of Science. He meets the issues openly and squarely, which is a point in his favor and shows that he has confidence in his own cause. But while he trusts that he has overthrown my arguments, he has not convinced me. Nevertheless he has succeeded in making me anxious to add a few comments in further elucidation of my proposition on the main issue of the Religion of Science, which is the problem of personality.

The main objection made by my critic, indeed the

¹My reply has been delayed because the review of Dr. Greene only came to my notice a few weeks ago.

only one that needs a reply, is condensed in these words:

"On Dr. Carus's hypothesis an ethical system becomes impossible. 'Personality is the basis of moral activity,' but, according to the 'religion of science,' personality is only an illusion."

Here I have to express my unreserved agreement with my critic's view that "personality is the basis of moral activity"; and did the Religion of Science teach that personality is an illusion, it would have missed the mark. The Religion of Science teaches that the metaphysical conception of an ego-personality is an illusion, but it not only does not deny, but actually insists on the existence of personality and the paramount importance of the rôle that personality plays in religion.

This is the difference: The metaphysical philosopher declares that man's soul is a mysterious *Ding an sich*, which is in possession of sentiments, ideas, and volitions. Positivism discards the belief in things in themselves, and insists that the sentiments, ideas, and volitions themselves constitute man's soul. And the question between the two views is not limited to such religious ideas as God and soul, but applies generally to all conceptions, to the notions of common life and also to scientific generalisations, such as gravity, matter, electricity, or chemical affinity.

Metaphysical philosophy conceives the world as a duality; it assumes the existence, first, of substance and then of predicates with which substance is endowed. The substance is supposed to be unknowable, while its attributes are knowable. What matter is, we are told, is a profound mystery; we only know the qualities of matter; what electricity, what light, what fire is, we can never know, experience teaches us only their various modes of action. But how do we know anything at all about matter, mass, fire, electricity, and gravity? How do we know that they exist at all? Are these terms not mere abstractions? Are they not simply generalisations of certain actions of which our experience gives us knowledge? They are names by which we denote certain features that we observe under definite conditions, and the attributes of matter are all there is about matter. Matter means a definite quality of existence, it is the objectivity of things which affects sensation as resistance. Mass is weight and volume; heat is a mode of motion which disintegrates the molecular constitution of bodies, etc., etc. There is no duality of matter, heat, electricity, and in addition to them their attributes; but there is one unitary reality which by the method of abstraction is knowable in its various parts.

This view, which is sometimes called monism or a unitary world conception, sometimes positivism or the world conception which drops the assumptions of metaphysical entities and aims at making philosophy

a comprehensive and systematic statement of facts, may fairly be considered as victorious in the domain of scientific inquiry, and this being the case, it is only a question of time when it will invade the domain of popular thought and religious life. This much is sure, to those theologians who are accustomed to the old metaphysical world conception it appears like a threatening thundercloud, boding nothing but the destruction of a terrible cyclone.

It is true that positivism overthrew, in the domain of science, astrology, alchemy, the belief in a phlogiston or fire substance, the belief in magic, the hope of finding the philosopher's stone, and all kindred notions, but for that reason it cannot be denounced as destructive; for it gave us astronomy, chemistry, and all the modern sciences which are slowly accomplishing much grander things than any alchemist ever could anticipate or hope for. And the same is true in religion. Positivism will abolish the traditional metaphysicism in religion, but it will not destroy religion; it will give us a deeper and more solid and a nobler interpretation of the same facts, which are the ever present realities of our sublimest hopes and highest aspirations.

It is fashionable at the present day to rail at theology to the detriment of religion, and to scoff at the pretensions of orthodoxy, in favor of universal tolerance. But what is theology but religion in a scientific conception; and what is orthodoxy but the confidence of being in possession of the truth? The abolition of theology would degrade religion to mere sentimentality, and a contempt of the ideal of orthodoxy presupposes that truth and error are of equal value. What we need is the right theology and the right orthodoxy! But how shall we decide right or wrong, genuine or false, truth or error, if not by a painstaking investigation, or, in a word, by science. The religious problem is not without the pale of scientific investigation. Let us therefore investigate reverently but fearlessly, and let us bear in mind that truth, whatever truth may be, is religious revelation, and that science, accordingly, is the prophecy which is with us, even to-day. It is the spirit that comforteth us; it is the voice of God, more hallowed than conscience and tradition, both of which may err.

Science is the verdict of the divine tribunal which no one can ignore without cutting himself loose from the source of truth. There is a holiness in science which neither the scientists nor the leaders of religious thought have sufficiently emphasised. If there is any light by which man can hope to illumine his path so as to take firm steps, it is science; and the application of this principle to all religious problems is what we call the Religion of Science.

Positivism in psychology does not deny the per-

sonality of man, it only denies that personality is a *Ding an sich*. It denies that there are two things, a person and the character with all its various attributes. Character is simply another name for a person of a definite mental and moral constitution. Positivism denies that there is a distinct ego-soul which is in possession of thought and will; it declares that the thought of a man and his will are parts of his being; they are the most important parts of himself; they are the essential constituents of his soul. It further shows that while death is a dissolution of the individual, the soul-forms are not destroyed; the sentiments, the thought, the will continue in their individual idiosyncrasy, and thus the personality of a man is preserved and does not suffer annihilation. Therefore, the main duty of life is the formation of soul, the building up of personality, the strengthening of character. The acquisition of knowledge and of wealth are not unimportant aims of life, but both are of secondary importance, for they are mere externalities in comparison to the moral worth of a strong will in well-directed personality.

The Religion of Science, in the same way that it does not abrogate the personality of man but offers a clearer, a truer, and a better explanation of personality, offers a more consistent and a more scientific conception of God. Martensen may be right that "all attempts to apprehend God as a superpersonal being" have "only led to the result that God has been apprehended as being beneath personality." While we may grant that so far they have not as yet led to something better, we do not see why finally they should not lead to a conception of God as being above personality. And that is the aim which the Religion of Science pursues. If our view is not more consistent, and philosophically more deepened than the traditional dogmatic God conception, we are willing to listen to criticism. Until we are refuted by argument, we still maintain that a personal God-conception is untenable. God cannot be an individual being as we are. If God exists at all, he must be superior to man; he cannot be a particular thing like his creatures; he must be that which conditions and forms all things; he must be the creator. That man is made in his image, does not justify the pagan habit of making gods after man's image.

✓ God as conceived by the Religion of Science is not a person who at a given moment is in a definite place and thinks one definite idea, saying (as we might) to himself, "I will do this, and shall not do that." God is omnipresent, immutable, eternal. Whatever is omnipresent, immutable, and eternal, is a feature of God's being. He is that presence which is forming the world in every detail, revealing itself most completely in man's rational will and moral aspirations,

which I conceive to be the characteristic marks of personality. Thus God, albeit that he is not an individual person, is yet the condition of all personality. He is not a person himself; he is not a human individual like man; he is not a limited being of a particular cast of mind, but without him there would be nothing that constitutes personality, no reason, no science, no moral aspiration, no ideal, no aim and purpose in man's life. God, in a word, is that which makes all this possible. He is, therefore, not less than personality, but infinitely more than personality, or briefly stated: He is superpersonal.

Now let us regard this conception of God and of man's soul as a matter of private opinion, as a philosophical view which is proposed for what it is worth, and may be accepted by some, while it will be rejected by others. The question arises, should it not at once, as soon as we see that it differs from the traditional interpretation of Christianity, be classed as Anti-Christian or even as anti-religious? If it is suffered as an allowable interpretation of religion, "is it not," as my critic claims, "apt to mislead the community at the outset"?

This is a question which I have carefully considered and reconsidered, and I am not willing to mislead the community. ✕ Nevertheless, I have come to the conclusion that an interpretation of religion is not religion itself, and if Christianity is to survive the present crisis, it will have to enter into a new phase of its development. The present crisis is by no means extraordinary or fatal; nor is it due to a disease of the times; it is the inevitable result of the natural growth of our scientific comprehension. The same arguments with which now the traditional conception of Christianity is defended, have been used time and again against the Copernicans and lately against the evolutionists.)

✕ The main question is, Is Christianity capable of growth or not? Is it a doctrine once revealed that remains the same for ever and aye, or is it an historical movement which reflects an eternal truth that with the increase of scientific insight is better and better understood? When Christ appeared, he gave a powerful impetus to the world, which became the beginning of a new era; he started the movement, but he did not reveal the full truth! He spoke in parables only, and promised the continuance of divine revelation in the spirit of truth, the comforter, the Holy Ghost. And this spirit of truth came and ensouled the disciples who otherwise would not have had the courage to preach the gospel of resurrection. Whatever error the early Christians may have cherished in the first days of the Church, this much is sure that the actual idea of the new creed, the idea of immortality, was its strength, and if the truth was neither

clearly nor scientifically understood, the sentiment was eagerly apprehended. The original doctrines changed. The Jewish Christianity, with its belief in the millennium on earth, gave way to the Greek Christianity of the belief in the logos made flesh; both were necessary phases in the growth of the new religion. The blossom develops but its petals fall off when the fruit begins to ripen. So the dogmatology of Christianity served its purpose, and when in the age of science its flowers fade it is the sign that religion is entering into a phase of greater maturity.

If "distinctively Christian" means that which Christian councils have declared to be distinctively Christian, then the Religion of Science must unequivocally be regarded as Anti-Christian. But if these various doctrines of Christian dogmatology, especially the metaphysical interpretation of men's personality, were, indeed, the characteristic features of Christianity, why did the founder of Christianity neglect to discuss and explain them? Christ never took the trouble to investigate any one of the fundamental problems of psychology, and confined his sermons to a consideration of practical questions, using the language of his time and adopting the popular conceptions of his contemporaries, such as the idea of demoniacal possession as the cause of disease. And indeed, had he spoken the language of the civilised nations of the nineteenth century, and had he explained the Copernican world conception and the theory of evolution, he would have preached to deaf ears; his mission necessarily would have been a failure. Jesus, in order to become Christ and be the founder of Christianity, had to be a man of his time in order to be comprehensible to his contemporaries. His time was the point to which the laws had to be applied and through which he could affect the whole future of mankind. It was not his business to reveal the scientific truths of later centuries; he had come to kindle a fire on earth, the fire of love, of good will, of a hunger after righteousness. That being accomplished, he left the completion of his work to the spirit whom he had promised to send.

Christ's views were interpreted by the fathers of the Church, and they formulated the dogmas of Christianity, which by many Christians are supposed to be binding to this day. They, being believers in the philosophy of their time, foisted a metaphysical conception upon Christianity, and if the metaphysics of Athanasius, St. Augustine, and Thomas à Kempis be, indeed, the distinctive feature of Christianity, then Christianity cannot remain the religion of the future. I claim, however, that a positivistic conception of religion is at least not less scriptural than the metaphysical dogmatism of an ego-soul and a God-individual.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life!" and again, explaining what he meant by truth, he

said, "The words which I speak unto you, they are the truth." He does not say, "I am an ego-being, or a metaphysical entity, or a person in itself, that is in possession of ideas," but he says, "I am the truth, and words are the truth;" and "words," of course, are an embodiment of ideas. This conception of Christ is actually the essence of Greek Christianity, which is briefly expressed in the sentence, "The word became flesh." It is the doctrine that Christ is the incarnation of the logos. Christ has not the logos; he is the logos. This is positivism which in the mind of a metaphysical philosopher would be rank heresy; but it is the philosophy of the Religion of Science condensed into a single word.

Several centuries ago all the representative Doctors of Divinity argued that if the earth were not flat, God's word would be a lie and that therefore science was wrong and the Church was right. The adversaries of the Copernican system have disappeared, but the old argument, although its worthlessness is unequivocally established, is repeated whenever a new conflict arises between a better comprehension of facts and traditional errors that touch religious questions.

And what is the spirit whom Christ promised to send? The spirit appears in the aspirations and revelations of truth. The spirit manifests itself in the zeal for every righteous cause and in the recognition of new discoveries and a better comprehension of the world and of the purpose of life. The spirit, in these days, moves preëminently in the progress of man's social relations and appears in fullest radiance in the advance of science. Science, indeed, as the ultimate touchstone of truth, is the highest expression of the revelation of the spirit. And here we remind our friends who still adhere to a literal belief in dogmas, of the awful saying of Jesus that, "All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost has never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation."¹

Why is this? The answer is simple enough. It is not God who condemns the sinner; but the sin of the sinner has its natural consequences, and that is what we call damnation. Now, if a man, as a matter of principle, shuts out the light that God sends him, how can he expect salvation? The dogmatist who for the sake of blind faith shuts out the light of scientific truth, be he ever so pious and well-intentioned, is, in the long run, hopelessly doomed to go to the wall, because he despises the information through the spirit. There is no hope for him who with conscious intention sets himself against the progress of the age. Self-stultification that stunts the intellectual development of the mind is as much a sin as theft and

¹ Mark, iii., 29-30.

murder; and if its cause lies in the heart's hostile disposition toward the light, it is the gravest sin imaginable, for it is a slaying of the spirit.

✓ The Religion of Science proposes a reform that is radical; it is not a reform such as is proposed by various liberal theologians who object to one or another dogma, but a reform which changes the whole interpretation of the traditional material.

The reformatory efforts of liberal theologians are often very inconsistent. They misunderstand the symbolical nature of religious dogmas and, accepting dogmas in the literal sense, object to the irrationality of one or another doctrine. Thus their reform is partial and would lead, if it were consistent, to an utter dissolution of religion. The attitude of such *ex-parte* reformers is splendidly caricatured in Hudor Genone's satire "The Little Glass Slipper."¹ There we are told that one of the little girls at school refused to believe in a crystal slipper; she protested that she believed in everything else; she believed in a plenary inspiration of Cinderella as a whole. She believed in the wicked sisters and a genuine live prince. Even the transformation of the pumpkin and mice into a royal carriage gave her no difficulty, but she could not make up her mind to believe in glass slippers. The result was that she was tried and condemned for heresy.

With all my close relations to liberalism, I cannot help being in strong sympathy with the old-fashioned orthodoxy, with all its hardness and stern rigidity. There is a consistency of thought in the traditional dogmatism that is absent in the most conspicuous liberal theologians. Hengstenberg, in spite of his narrowness, is more logical than Harnack, and after all, I would venture to defend the old-fashioned orthodoxy against all sectarian innovations, if one point only were granted me,—a point which has never been denied by any one of the Christian churches,—viz., that all dogmas are symbols of truth, that their allegorical nature must be insisted upon, and that they must not be understood in their literal sense.

✓ The Religion of Science comes as an ally of the traditional dogmatism, and promises to preserve of it all that is true and good. The Religion of Science alone can transfigure the old doctrines and change them into a new orthodoxy which, as the trust in scientifically verifiable truth, has a better claim to the title than the blind faith theory of the old metaphysical interpretation of Christianity.

* * *

A few words might be added in reply to the six points which Dr. Greene raises.

1. From the standpoint of the Religion of Science there is no objection to the definition of religion as

"the sum of man's relations to God." The Religion of Science, however, is intended to start without assumption and must therefore build upon a broader basis. We cannot speak of God until he has been traced in experience as the authority for moral conduct. This done, and having acquired a clear definition of God, we can say that "religion is the sum of man's relations to God."

2. The quotation from Tiele is not pertinent, and if it were pertinent it would prove nothing. Whatever ideas men had about gods, they always regarded them as authorities for conduct whose will they had to fear, or to obey, or to mind in some way.

✗ 3. If a new view has never before been presented in history, it cannot for that reason be condemned on the ground that it is "unhistorical."

✗ 4. Personality, indeed, is the basis of moral activity, but personality is transformable. New ideas can be implanted into the soul and old ones can be subdued. All religious aspiration culminates in eradicating all egotism and inoculating love of truth and righteousness. As says St. Paul: "Now, not I live, but Christ liveth in me."

The old view of personality involves us in intricate difficulties which finally lead to mysticism. How shall we, for instance, explain heredity, if the soul is an independent being that is combined with the body; or how shall we explain the relation between the person and the ideas which the person has. All the mysteries that originate on the assumption of a metaphysical personality disappear in a positive conception of psychology.

5. It goes without saying that the non-existence of a metaphysical personality can in no wise be construed as a denial of the existence of consciousness.

6. No impartial reader will discover in St. Paul's writings a high conception of marriage, or the deep obligations which marriage involves toward the children to be born. It is true that the Apostle was confronted with exceptional conditions in Corinth, but the more it would have been his duty to explain the significance of marriage. If he failed to do so, it is apparently due to the fact that here he was lacking in comprehension and regarded marriage as a mere concession to sensuality.

Concerning the last point we have to say that Dr. Greene's quotation goes against his own theory. Christ does not say that the Heavenly Father will comply with the wishes of those who pray. The passage, "Ask and it shall be given you," is on the condition that we ask the right thing. Christ enjoins us to ask not for our will to be done, but for God's will to be done; not for the coming of our kingdom, but for the coming of God's kingdom; not for the glorification of our name, but that God's name shall be

hallowed; not that we should acquire wealth and earthly possessions, but that we should not take heed of the morrow, being satisfied with the bread that God gives us this day; not that we should prosper, but that we should learn to avoid temptation and be redeemed from evil. All these prayers are intended, not to change God's will, but the will of the man who prays. It is the abolition of prayer in the sense of begging, and raises the pagan habit of praying into the higher domain of self-discipline. All Christian prayer is a preparation of the heart for the reception of the Holy Spirit. This is corroborated by Dr. Greene's quotation: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

But prayer is not sufficient for the reception of the Spirit; prayer is the preparation of the heart to receive it. The next and, indeed, the main condition for the reception of the Spirit is exertion. Unless we are willing to learn and exert ourselves, we shall not receive the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the truth that continues to reveal itself to mankind in its progressing science and civilisation. May our minds be open to receive the truth, and may we not harden our hearts against the teachings of the Holy Spirit!

P. C.

THE JESUIT MISSION IN CHINA.

(From the Japanese.)

TRANSLATED BY KEIJIRO NAKAMURA.

THE editor of the *Shukyo* has lately discovered an old document, in the library of Prince Mito, in regard to the Jesuit Mission in China, and printed a very interesting article on the subject. The following is a liberal translation of the same:

"The decline of the Ming dynasty which dates back about three centuries caused the decline of Chinese civilisation. With it, philosophy, poetry, science, art, and political power began their downfall. Both Confucianism and Buddhism had been either too much dogmatised or corrupted, and the popular belief became a mere idolatry. Thus, there was a good chance for the introduction of a foreign religion.

"It was about this time (1583) that Ricci Mateo made the first successful introduction of the Jesuit Mission into China. After a hard study of the Chinese language for twenty years, he began to teach in China mathematics and astronomy besides preaching. And, at the same time, he rendered an invaluable service to the Chinese government by improving its astronomical observatory. He did this service in order to obtain the confidence of the Chinese Emperor; and thus to pave the way for his missionary work.

He published a book in the Chinese language, entitled: 'The Catechism of the Jesuits.' He died in 1610 at Peking.

"After him, came many Jesuits to China. They converted many prominent Chinese and established several churches in the Empire. This rapid progress was, however, after three quarters of a century, hindered by a reactionary movement of the conservatives. About 1670, a conservative, Chin, wrote to his emperor as follows:

"Several savages have recently emigrated into our empire. There are in our capital, Riochinga and Nosaubatz; in Nankin, Ohoshuk and Yabatak; and several others in different provinces. They call their countries the "Great West," and their religion, the teaching of Heavenly Masters. These names are indeed haughty enough. But, below heaven and along ocean, throughout this great continent, the powers of Your Majesty pervade and shine forth. Therefore, we call our empire the Great Ming. Why, then, do these savages, who are naturalised Chinese subjects, call their inborn land the Great West, and thus set up the Great East in opposition to the Great West? Do they commit treason or disrespect our kingdom?

"Your Majesty's dynasty has been flourishing generation after generation. Your lords call Your Majesty "Heavenly King." Your Majesty reigns the world below heaven, and the world calls Your Majesty "Son of Heaven." Your Majesty's government issues laws by studying our sacred, ancient usages. And we call these laws "heavenly ordinances." But the savages call their teaching the words of the heavenly master and they look down upon our laws as profane and local ordinances. They mislead our poor people and make them disloyal to Your Majesty. . . .

"This letter excited the court. Thereupon many converts left the creeds, and the Jesuit missionaries were frightened by a rumor that they were to be beheaded. About this time a Chinese convert championed the cause of the Jesuit mission and wrote the following lines to his emperor.

"I have heard of the unfounded criticism of our recently naturalised subjects. I have studied with them philosophy, science, and astronomy; and published many books through their invaluable assistance. They are all piled up on Your Majesty's desk. In regard to their conduct and views there is nothing that rouses my suspicion. I assure Your Majesty that they are all wise men. Their teaching is true, their conduct is just, their knowledge is both wide and exact, and their opinions are sound and reliable. They teach us to obey the Heavenly Lord and to abide by the good. How strikingly this idea coincides with our own! I do not find in their doctrine anything to be criticised. They praise God who is good and just, they

teach us to love our God, master, relatives, and neighbors, they persuade us to quit evil and abhor wrong. They say, if we commit sin in this world, we shall fall into hell and suffer eternal punishment; and if we do good, then we shall be born in heaven and enjoy everlasting happiness. This doctrine encourages good deeds and discourages evil doings. I do not see anything unreasonable and unjust in their teaching.'

"But this pleading had no effect, as the court was more and more inclining toward the opinion of the conservatives. Finally the Chinese Emperor ordered the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Empire. The Jesuit missionaries, however, were not discouraged by this maltreatment. They went in disguise into the interior and preached quietly throughout many provinces. There they met the strong opposition of a Chinese Buddhist. The following is a summary of the criticism of the Jesuit teaching by the Buddhist, Guyak Jensch:

"They (the Jesuits) say birds, beasts, grasses, and trees have their beginning and their end; while heaven, earth, spiritual beings, and the souls of men, as once created, would be immortal. This they say because they do not understand that man contains in himself the absolute truth and that this universe converges in his mind. It is nonsensical to say that animals and plants, heaven and earth, spirits and men have been created by God. On the contrary, these things have never been created, for the essence of existence is beginningless and endless. Let me prove this:

"1. The appearance of mountain, river, and continent is due to the will of man. For if our mind were deprived of will and thought, then a distinction between ego and non-ego would disappear, the three worlds of past, present, and future would disappear, consciousness would become naught, and everything possessing colors and forms would go out of appearance. Thus, by quitting consciousness, we return to a stage of absolute equality of everything, and at the same time we attain to the absolute of the universe. Therefore, birds and beasts, grasses and trees, heaven and earth, and spirits (that is to say their substance) have never been created, but they are beginningless and endless.

"2. Now let me prove this conclusion from the point of view of the "space-and-time" philosophy.

"Since space is infinite, its contents also must be infinite. And since time is infinite, space must be beginningless and endless. Therefore the universe has neither beginning nor end. All creatures including beasts and birds, and even grasses and trees, heaven and earth and gods exist in that same infinite space and time. How, then, can we speak about before and after? Suppose we say that something in this world has sprung up and decayed. In that case we predi-

cate this of a mere change of substance and do not speak of actual creation and extinction. Therefore this universe could never have been created nor shall it be annihilated. Thus it follows that the Heavenly Master is not the creator.

"Of course one cannot realise this truth unless one understands that appearance and disappearance are due to consciousness and illusion; and that in the background of appearance there is a universally equal and absolute reality.'

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